M.A.C.C.

MODESTO ATARI COMPUTER CLUB

DATA LINK

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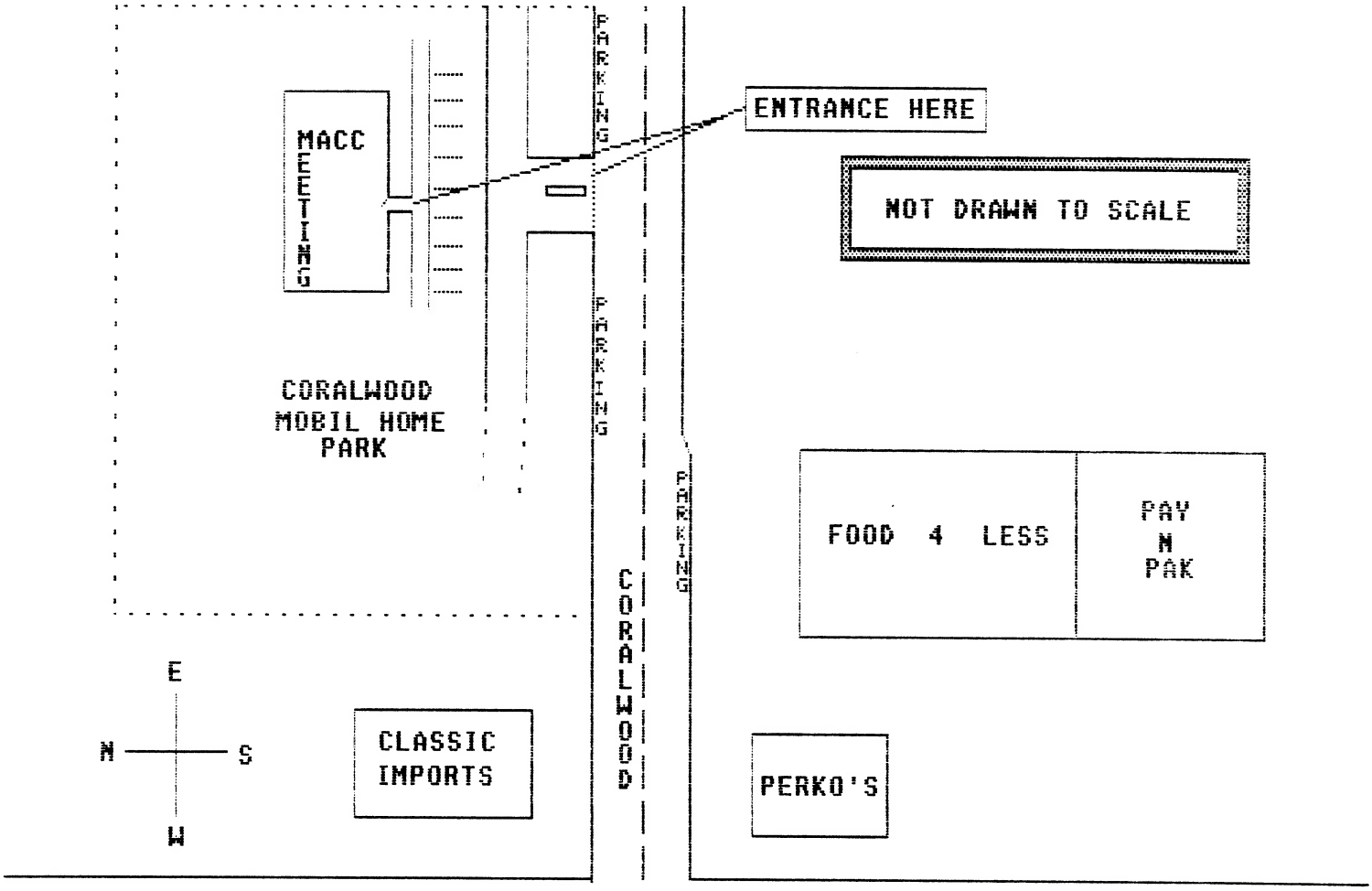

FOR DIRECTIONS OR QUESTIONS CALL:
RAY LANG AT 521-8766
LLOYD NICHOLAS AT 527-6367

ZOOMRACKS
A Review by L. Nicholas

If you have an address list or a recipe file or some other list of items to keep track of and you also have an Atari ST computer then I know the perfect Data Base for you. This Data Base of course is ZOOMRACKS. I am sure you are now thinking, sure just another Data Base, But here you are wrong. ZOOMRACKS has a new concept or at least new for computers. This concept is the rack as in time card racks. These racks are filled with cards and you can only see the top of each card. When you choose a card from the rack then all of the information appears. You can have up to nine (9) racks in the screen at one time. Each rack can hold thousands of cards if you have the memory. In each card you can have up to 27 fields and each field can hold up to 250 lines of text at 80 characters per line. If you have TOS in ROM you should be able to support about 1500 cards. If this seems like a lot of information, well it is. One little thing that they have put into the program that I liked very much was the gauge (which resembles a gas gauge) to tell you how much memory you have left. One other thing is the speed that you can access any Rack, Card, or Field. It is very hard to get fouled up since every screen gives you a way back to the previous one.

One feature that I liked very much was the tutorial that is available whenever you boot the program. You can be led through all of the program functions and try different things at your own pace. What makes this possible are it's macro's. Macro's are several commands that can be performed with a single keystroke.

The first time that I booted ZOOMRACKS I must admit that I was a little baffled by the way it worked. I had used many Data Bases but none of them operated quite like this. The next time that I booted it up I was a little more relaxed and ready to learn something new. As it turns out, ZOOMRACKS is so easy to learn that someone with very little computer experience could pick it up very quickly. The concept is what threw me at first but what has sold me now.

So now we will talk about the negative side of ZOOMRACKS. #1- You must have an Atari ST or IBM computer to use it. #2- It costs money. #3- Everyone does not have it.

There are so many features packed into this program that I could fill pages with them. The possibilities are endless if you use your imagination. If you are thinking of a Data Base in the near future, you should check out ZOOMRACKS. You don't need to take my word for it, just read all the reviews in computer magazines and newsletters or give me a call and I will be glad to give you a demo copy of the program, a new concept that will knock your socks off.

We will be having an ST SIG meeting at the beginning of the regular meeting or about 6:00 PM. I have a Demo copy of ZOOMRACKS that will show you all the features of the program. The demo has a few limitations on how many racks that you can have but other than that I think that you will find it very complete. I will be bringing my ST to the meeting so If you would like a copy of this disk, just bring a 3 1/2 inch disk to the meeting and I will make you a copy.

INSIDE M.A.C.C
by RAY LANG

Last months meeting was a hard one to find I guess by the turn out. This is understandable, we did move the meeting room on you. If you didn't get the directions or have any questions please call me or one of the other board members. We'll be more than glad to tell you where it is. The new room is great! There's enough room to have not only the main meeting but also the SIG meetings as well. The BASIC SIG and the new ST SIG will be meeting together in the same room at probably the same time. The BASIC SIG is at 6:00pm on the night of the meeting. If you have just bought your machine or have some questions on how to work with the basics please come to this sig and bring your troubles. We will give it our best shot at solving the problem.

This months meeting is going to be one of those meetings were we are going to ask for your input. We do this every so often to keep in touch and see how were doing. If you have any ideas or questions about the way the club is run or how the club funds are spent this is your chance to get it heard. This includes the meetings, the BBS , or the library and anything else.

The raffle this month is getting better and bigger. This month we tossed ATARIWRITER in the pile of software that you can pick from. Don't forget that the 1020 PLOTTER wasn't picked up yet so you still can pick it as one of the prizes, along with the ST software that we got from Hippopotamus Software.

One last thing, the club library will be at the meeting this month if you want any disk.

All of you that came to the meeting did good on the parking. Please remember to park outside of Corralwoods complex. See you at the meeting.

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LIBRARY NEWS
by Roger Espinola
M.A.C.C. Librarian

Sorry about last month!! I really had good intentions of having things ready to go for the meeting, but one morning I woke up and discovered that my body was suffering from a slight malfunction that pretty well kept me flat on my back for several weeks. Needless to say, everything I had planned on doing came to a screeching halt. Unfortunately, the body is still not quite up to par, so I really don't know what I will have available for the June meeting. I will have the library at the meeting with all the existing disks, but I cannot promise that I will be able to physically create new ones before the meeting. I will just have to see how quickly I can get these muscles and nerves functioning properly again.

Anyway, I have all the programs from Analog and Antic magazines available to me, through the June issues, at this time. If my body allows, I will see what I can do. If the body does not allow, then it will be the July meeting before I have new disks available. Only time will tell. But, sooner or later, these programs will make their way into the library. If there are any programs that you really would like in the library as soon as possible, let me know, and I will put those requests at the top of my priorities list.

I wish I could be more definite about what I will have available this month, but circumstances just do not allow me that luxury at this time.

The Following file is a series of excerpts of information contained in Computing Today, the online magazine on Genie. This data is all from the month of May, 1986. It is reproduced here with the permission of Hartley and Pattie Lesser.

**** ABOUT COMPUTING TODAY! ****
*** THE COMPANY ***

Computing Today! is a production of F & L Communications, with corporate offfices engaged in custom newsletter publishing, magazine consulting, contract articles, PR and advertising services.

Their editorial address is:

576 Santander Drive, San Ramon, CA 94583

=== Clippings - News ===

GEM IS A GEM

Digital Research (Monterey, CA) has reported that more than 200,000 GEM software units have shipped worldwide through retail and OEM channels, according to DRI president John Rowley. The company has also reported 37 OEMs are now using GEM software for a value added ingredient in their pc product line, and include the likes of IBM, Olivetti, Siemens, ICL, Xerox, Philips, AT&T, Apricot and Tandy. IBM's Federal System Division will distribute the GEM applications to government micro users under terms of one recent licensing agreement.

GENIE GALLOPS WITH GROWING SUBSCRIBER BASE

General Electric Information Services Company (Rockville, MD) has announced that GEnie, the General Electric Network for Information Exchange, the company's domestic network service for pc users, has reached the 12,000 paid subscriber plateau only seven months after service began on October 1, 1985. Additionally, 46 additional local telephone nodes across the US have been installed across the US for access to GEnie. The service is available for $5 per hour, non-prime time access, at either 300 or 1200 baud. There is also a 2400 baud service in 63 US cities. Personal computer users can sign up for GEnie from their own keybaord by calling 1-800-638-8369.

=== Release Report - Atari ===

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE INSIDE ST

Activision, Inc. (415/960-0410) has discovered Little Computer People are now residing inside the Atari ST line of computer systems. In conjunction with this announcement, the company will also release Atari ST version of The Activision Little Computer People Discovery Kit, which takes advantage of the expanded capabilities of the computer system. This new version contains completely refurnished models of the highly acclaimed 2-1/2 story "house-on-a-disk" software used in luring out and befriending Little Computer People (LCP). Once an LCP moves into a home, he can communicate with, play games with, and entertain his computer's owner.

The "house-on-a-disk" contains a six-room home with all of the necessary comforts, as well as a number of communication tools that have been designed to take advantage of the expanded capabilities of the ST computer. Each room, including a bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, living room, study and recreation room, has been designed with more detail and more fixtures than the original system versions, and for no additional rent! An

organ, for example, which plays multiple combinations of sounds, is found in place of a piano. The price is
$49.95.

TWO RAINBIRD OFFERINGS FOR ST

Firebird Licensees, Inc. (201/934-7373) has released two new recreational software offerings for the Atari ST user, both developed by Rainbird Software in the United Kingdom. The first is StarGlider, a strategic mission with air-to-air and air-to-ground combat flight simulation. Featuring 3-D vector graphics and utilizing first person perspective and hidden surface removal, this game offers unparalleled realism and an accurate feel of low level flying. The aim is to destroy hostile ground forces and rid the planet of airborne enemy, including the infamous StarGlider.

The second offering is The Pawn, an illustrated text adventure with an advanced parser. The story is absorbing, humorous, lively, full of intrigue and puzzle, yet subtle enough to appeal to the beginner and hardened adventurer alike. The Pawn understands plain English, knows the size, volume and weight of game objects, their texture, and their magical properties. In fact, the program stores 135 pieces of information for each object. The game is truly interactive and will respond intelligently to conversation. Both games are available now.

ST PRODUCTIVITY SOFTWARE IS INTRO'D

Regent Software (818/883-0951) has debuted Regent Base, a full function, relational GEM database with procedural language for the Atari ST computer. The powerful combination of Regent Base's procedural language and the extensive use of the Atari ST GEM interface make this offering an excellent database ready for all information and record keeping needs. Written 100 percent in assembly language, Regent Base procedural commands are spelled out in simple English, and windows, editable text fields, mouse buttons, output windows, and graphic text strings may also be used. The program also includes a sorting program to reorganize information in Regent Base tables, with multiple sorting of up to three fields supported. The price is $99.95.

The company has also released Regent Word II, the full GEM version of their Regent Word I. This new offering adds a 30,000 word online spelling checker and mail-merge facility and uses all of the ST's advanced facilities. There is automatic reformatting of text as typed showing bold, itlaics, underline, superscripted and subscrited text; every command can be accessed via the keyboard or the mouse; with support for over 15 printers. There are online help screens and the 30,000 word spelling checker interactively checks the document for misspelled words. The dictionary can be expanded to more than 100,000 words. The price is $99.95.

=== Release Report - multiple system releases ===

NEW FANTASY ADVENTURE GAME RELEASED

Datasoft (818/701-5161) has released the first module of a new adventuregame series called Alternate Reality. The first game offering is The City, which will form the basic scenario for future releases that will include dungeons and other areas not encompassed by The City. The character the player develops in this first scenario will be used in all future installments of Alternate Reality.

The player, in this first game, is kidnapped by an alien spaceship and finds himself or herself in a room that has but a single exit. Once through that door, the player is in Xebec's Demis, The City. Characteristics, such as Stamina, Charm, Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Skill and Wealth are immediately assigned to your character and mystery and danger await you in the streets of The City. Current releases are for the Apple // series, Commodore 64 and Atari XL computers. Future releases will include Macintosh, IBM PC and PCjr and Atari 520ST.

SCSI OPTICAL DRIVE NOW SHIPPING

Optotech Inc. (303/570-7500) is now shipping the first 5-1/4 inch, write-once optical storage system that supports the Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI). This new product family, which includes a 200 megabyte-per-side disk drive, controller and software tools, offers OEMs and systems integrators high performance features such as: 1:1 interleave, multi-track buffering and the most extensive error handling capability of any optical product yet developed. The family fully supports the SCSI Common Command Set.

Other features include: during media formatting, surface analysis locates approximately 95 percent of the unusable sectors; data and related error correction information is banded into nine areas of the surface of the media, the system can read and write optical disks used by Optotech's PC product family, and vice versa, allowing for the transportation oF data between incompatible compute systems. OEMs can purchase SCSI system evaluation kits, priced at $5,000, from Optotech and its distributors starting in late June or early July. The kit includes a drive, controller, optical disk cartridge and software tools.

OKIDATA LOOKING FOR INCREASED SALES

Okidata (Mt. Laurel, NJ) has announced a $50 rebate for its Microline 192 dot matrix printer, who suggested price was $499, before rebate. This program was initiated on May 1st and purchasers can complete a rebate coupon, available in selected newspapers or authorized dealers, and return it to Okidata along with a sales receipt and the unit's serial number to be eligible for the $50 payment.

Not all was joy at last week's COMDEX...seems the Federal Communications Commission decided to use the show as the target for a raid by six investigators. Approximately 2,500 products were barred from sale due to uncertified equipment allegations by the FCC, each product ticketed on the floor. These units allegedly fail to meet FCC RF emissions regulations. Fines could be levied against the vendors of this equipment.

=== Release Report - Atari ===

BRODERBUND RELEASES TWO MORE FOR ST

Broderbund Software (415/479-1170) has released two new text adventures from Synapse, a wholly owned subsidiary of Broderbund, for the Atari ST computers. The first is Essex, where players slip into futuristic science fiction as tourists aboard the colossal starship the game is named after. What starts as a restful vacation soon leads to an intergalactic mission to rescue the one man who can thwart the insidious Vollchon invaders threatening all the planets in the Sirus sector. The second offering is Brimstone, where players help Sir Gawain of the Round Table find the five mystical words which will release him from Ulro, the fantastic netherworld. Beyond the castle moat

and the massive door, players must consort with Underdemons, outwit the deranged White Apes and battle the awesome Green Knight - or be trapped for eternity. Each game is priced at $44.95.

=== Release Report - Hardware / Accessories / Peripherals ===

TWO NEW C. ITOH PRINTERS RELEASED

C. Itoh Digital Products (213/327-2110) had introduced their ProWriter C-315, a wide-carriage dot matrix printer designed for business applications and capable of speeds up to 300 characters per second (cps). This 136 column printer features a 50 cps near letter quality print mode and produces documents at 33 cps in letter quality mode. All functions are easily selectable from the front panel, including a choice of IBM or Epson codes on certain models. There is bottom, top and rear paper feed and a push/pull tractor. A built-in paper loading feature also loads paper automatically into printing position with a single flip of a switch. The printer includes a graphic resolution of up to 240 by 216, a variety of resident character fonts and optional font cartridges for additional type styles. The unit operates at less than 55 dBA and includes an 8-bit parallel or RS232 serial interface for compatibility with most pcs. The suggested retail price is $819.

The company has also released an upgraded version of their ProWriter C-310 that provides the dot matrix printer with a "dual identity" between Epson FX-85 and IBM ProPrinter control codes. Called the C-310 XP, the new printer prints at speeds up to 300 cps in draft mode at a noise level of less than 55 dBA. Letter quality printing is at 33 cps and near letter quality mode at 50 cps. Among other features are an easy to use semi-automatic paper loader for loading single sheets and a resolution of up to 240 by 216 dpi for business graphics. The unit will be available this summer for a suggested retail price of $649.

=== Release Report - Atari ===

THE PAWN NOW AVAILABLE FOR ATARI 520ST

Firebird Licensees, Inc. (201/934-7373) has released The Pawn, a new illustrated text adventure for the Atari 520ST. The Pawn was created by Magnetic Scrolls and utilizes the most sophisticated language parser of any adventure game yet released for micros, according to the company. The parser's powerful text-handling capabilities permit the user to input complex sentences and interact realistically with the game's characters and objects.

The setting of The Pawn is the enchanted world of Kerovnia during a period of social upheaval and political strife. Superb graphic screens augment the detailed text and present the game's characters and objects with amazing realism, thanks to a massive database of attributes and properties. The Pawn carries a suggested retail price of $44.95

ACTION ADVENTURE RELEASED FOR 520/140 ST

Polarware/Penguin Software (312/232-1984) has released The Sword Of Kadash for the Atari 520/1040 ST computers. This is a real-time, animated action game that lets the player develop his or her skill and powers, as in a fantasy role-playing game, and presents the player with a large world in which to travel, complete with traps and puzzles, as in an adventure game.

The player's mission is to

retrieve the enhanced Sword of Kadash, which is being kept under guard at the ominous Fortress of the Dragon. Once the Sword is in the player's possession, he or she must find the dragon and slay him. The guards are numerous; many the likes of which have never been seen before. Sword of Kadash allows the player to increase in strength with each successful encounter. Since there are over 200 rooms and passages to explore, and different difficulty levels to choose from, there are an endless variety of games to play. The pricing is $34.95.

=== Release Report - multiple system versions ===

OKIDATA DEBUTS ATARI PLUG 'N PRINT KIT

Okidata (609/235-2600) has unveiled their new Atari ST Plug 'N Print Kit for the Okimate 20 personal color printer. The new module connects the Okimate 20 to both the Atari 520ST and Atari 1040ST series pcs. Atari ST users can now print more than 125 colors, using Okimate 20's special color ribbon, to create high resolution pictures, graphics and professional quality overheads on a variety of media, including acetate.

The Atari ST compatible Okimate 20 will be available this month. The heart of this kit is the interface module, which inserts easily into the side of the Okimate 20. The kit features everything users need to begin printing immediately from their ST, including a data cable, "clean hands" cartridge ribbons (color and black), sample computer paper and complete instructions. Pricing for the Okimate 20 remains at $169, and the suggested retail price of the Atari ST Plug 'N Print Kit is $99.

ATARI 520ST DRIVE PROMO

Atari Corp. (Sunnyvale, CA) has launched a new consumer promotion program that will run through April and May of this year. A customer who purchases an Atari 520ST system can now buy an additional disk drive for $69.95, instead of the normal retail price of $199.95. %% The company has also announced an agreement with U.S. Gold and Activision to license popular Atari computer game titles. The titles have been licensed to the named companies for conversion and sale in the United Kingdom and Europe on European computer systems. Atari will retain international rights for these titles on the Atari computer and games systems.

EAR TO THE WALL INFO:

Atari Corporation has signed a distribution agremeent with Toys 'R Us, which happens to be the second largest toy chain in the USA. Expect Atari 520ST's to start showing up on outlet shelves late next month. (MAY)

=== Release Report - Atari computers ===

SSI INTROS 520ST CONVERSIONS

Strategic Simulations Inc. (415/964-1353) has announced conversions of two of the company's most popular games, PHANTASIE and COMPUTER BASEBALL, for the Atari 520ST computer. Phantasie is currently SSI's sales leader and is a multiple character role-playing game, with a party of one to six characters searching the Isle of Gelnor for nine rings that will help defeat the Black Lord. Computer Baseball, a best-selling sports strategy game, allows one or two players to adopt the guise of a major league team manager, with all offensive and defensive options. Players may also choose from a skills bank that

includes more than 20 great players from the past or present major league teams. Pricing for both offerings is $39.95

=== Release Report - Systems / Hardware / Peripherals ===

BACK-UP POWER SUPPLIES INTRO'D

Ohm/Electronics (800/323-2727) has introduced their new line of Scooter standby power supplies. Model SPS 250XT (250 watts of backup power) and Model SPS 500XT (500 watts), maintain an IBM PC or XT, Apple //, Macintosh and other compatible pcs running under full load from 10 to 15 minutes after loss of primary power. Also rated at 500 watts, Model SPS 500AT acts as a comforting Guard Robot for safe emergency operation of an IBM AT or compatible. This model has an extremely fast transfer time of less than three milliseconds. The other listed models act within four milliseconds of line power failure. An instant audible alarm and flashing indicator alert the user to the condition and provide ample time to preserve data and use normal shutdown procedures. If primary power returns, the system immediately switches back to standby. The suggested retail pricing is $389.95, $689.95 and $729.95, respectively.

TOSHIBA ENTERS COLOR PRINTER MARKET

Toshiba Information Systems Division (714/730-5000) has introduced their P351C, a color version of their P351 24-pin dot matrix printer. Features of the P351C are designed for business applications, including the capability to print overhead transparencies for business presentations and emulate Qume Sprint 11 daisywheel and IBM Color printers. The color printer is sold as a serial/parallel only and all units have bottom feed and six-part forms printing capability as standard features. Also, Microsoft Chart may be obtained at no cost by purchasers of the printer, who merely send in a copy of his or her invoice with the ribbon response card attached to the side of the box. The printer operates at up to 288 cps in draft mode, and emitts a noise level of only 58 decibels.

PRINTER SWITCH DEBUTED

Touchstone Technology Inc. (716/235-8358) has released an auto-manual printer switch that uses simple, embedded printer codes to direct the parallel output of any micro between any two parallel printers. The SOFTSWITCH is a solid state decoding and switching device that can be used as a manual A-B switch, or as a fully automatic, software-controlled or code-sensitive switch.
The unique circuitry switches all active lines and passes all acknowledgements and status signals to make the device compatible with all pcs and parallel printers.

The SOFTSWITCH permits printer selection by any one of four different methods: one- to three-digit codes embedded in the files of most popular word processors; one- to three-digit printer codes included in a short print statement within user-written software; manually from the SOFTSWITCH panel-mounted toggle switch; manually from the computer keyboard with the company's optional ($9.95) RAM-resident console software. The unit lists for $139.95, which includes an external ac-to-dc power supply, complete operating instructions, and a one-year warranty.

M.A.C.C.

Group Pres.....Ray Lang
Vice Pres.....Victor Hibler
Secretary.....Rick Paderes
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Treasurer.....Don Hansen
Editor.....Lloyd Nicholas
SYSOP.....George Ledoux

Sergeant/arms..Gerry Anshutz
Equip. Manager..Jerry Mulder

24 HOUR BBS
209-526-1000

Correspondence Address

Modesto Atari Computer Club
P.O. Box 3811
Modesto, Ca 95352

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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:
Disk Library (now has 70 disks)
Discount purchases at various area vendors
Support from other ATARI users
A monthly Newsletter

ATARI User Group Support
****

Items for print in the newsletter must be submitted ten days before the next meeting
(handwritten copy okay if legible)
****
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JUNE 1986

EXCHANGES WELCOME

Modesto Atari Computer Club
P.O. Box 3811
Modesto, Ca. 95352

Our next Meeting:
JUNE 11, 1986
(Wed.) MAIN 7:00 pm
SIG's meet at 6:30 pm
TO:

AT:
Coralwood Mobil home park
Recreation Center